GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:886
ANSWERED ON:09.03.2005
TITANIUM DEPOSIT
Badiga Shri Ramakrishna;Kaushal Shri Raghuvir Singh

Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tsunami has proved a blessing in disguise for Tamil Nadu and Kerala as reported in the Rashtradoot dated January 15, 2005;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) whether the valuable Titanium metal is very useful for nuclear and Aeroplane industries and a huge amount has been deposited on the surface as a result of Tsunami;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any survey has been conducted by the Government in this regard;

(f) if so, the details thereof;

(g) whether the Government has any plan for commercial production of the above metal; and

(h) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE(SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN):

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(a) & (b) The coastal tracts of the country in the States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa contain reserves of beach sand minerals such as ilmenite, rutile, zircon, monazite, garnet and sillimanite. Of these, ilmenite and rutile are titanium bearing minerals. Following the tsunami, a number of newspapers had reported that the tsunami has caused huge quantum of heavy mineral deposition in the eastern and western coasts. Scientists of the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration & Research (AMD) under the Department of Atomic Energy have carried out studies on these coastal stretches and the highlights of these studies are as under:

• Along the coastal stretches of Tamil Nadu and Pondichery, the deposition of heavy minerals due to tsunami is patchy, inconsistent and with a maximum thickness of 30 − 40 cm. In some instances the tsunami waves have destroyed the existing concentrations in dunes and deposited them inland, thereby relocating the existing deposits. Thus there is no substantial enhancement of heavy mineral deposits in these areas.

• In the Kerala coast, the effect of tsunami around the known beach sand deposits of Charava is significant. Preliminary studies indicated an enhancement of nearly 0.46 milliion tonnes of ilmenite and 0.03 million tonnes of rutile spread over 0.58 sq.km area.

(c) & (d) Because of its exceptionally high strength to weight ratio, titanium metal has diverse applications in aerospace industries. It has also applications in the nuclear and other sectors.

(e) & (f) As detailed in replies to parts (a) and (b) of the Question.

(g) & (h) Beach sand mineral deposits with ilmenite being the major constituent, are under exploitation in the country for several years now. While bulk of the ilmenite produced is exported, some portion is also converted into value added products like synthetic rutile, titanium dioxide pigment etc. within the country. The Government of India has in October 1998 notified a new policy on Beach Sand Minerals with a view to increase the rate of exploitation of the minerals and also to attract more investment in this sector, both private and foreign along with latest technology for value addition within the country.